

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2422
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSULMILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TURIN
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH

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MILAN HOLD FOR TURIN

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT,ELAB,IT
SUBJECT: CISL LEADERS PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER US VISIT

REF: STATE 96613

1. SUMMARY. LEADERS OF ITALIAN CATHOLIC-ORIENTED LABR CONFEDERATION CISL HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE APRIL24, FOLLOWING THEIR ONE-WEEK US VISIT (REFTELS) AND PRECEDING THE APRIL 25 LIBERATION DAY HOLIDAY. PRESS COVERAGE INDICATED THAT CISL WAS MOVING CLOSER TO THE AFL-CIO AGAIN, AFTER YEARS OF RUPTURE, ALTHOUGH "CORDIAL DISAGREEMENTS" REMAINED, AND THAT THE CISL LEADERS VIEWED THE VISIT AND EXCHANGE OF OPINION AS POSITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE. THE CISL LEADERS EVIDENTLY DEFENDED THEMSELVES EFFECTIVELY AGAINST THE USUAL TENDENTIOUS QUESTIONS AND ALLU-

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SIONS TO ALLEGED AFL-CIO INTERFERENCE AND UNION-SPLITTING AND CISL SERVITLITY, HOWEVER, LEFTIST PRESS ARTICLES PLAYED UP THESE QUEWTIONS AND ALLUSIONS (PARTICULARLY ROME DAILY II MESSAGGERO AND NATIONAL WEEKLY L'ESPRESSO: COMMUNIST DAILY L'UNITA', ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS STRAIGHT-FORWARD AND CORRECT INT ITS COVERAGE, ALTHOUGH IT STRESSED THAT AFL-CIO AND CISL ATTITUDES TOWARD UNION UNITY IN ITALY REMAIN DI-

VERGENT). ALL PAPERS REPORTED THAT AN AFL-CIO ELEGATION WILL VISIT CISL LATER IN THE YEAR. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER AFTER TALKING TO THE RETURNED VISITORS. END SUMMARY.

2. CISL SECRETARY GENRAL LUIGI MACARIO, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL PIERRE CARNITI, NATIONAL SECRETARY FRANCO MARINI AND INTERNATIONAL OFFICE CHIEF EMILIO GABAGLIO HELD A PRESS CONVERENCEMONDAY ABOUT THEIR JUST-COMPLETED US VISIT. WIDE PRESS COVERAGE INDICATED THAT THE VISIT WAS "POSITIVE" FROM CISL'S POINT OF VIEW, THAT THERE WAS A "PALPABLE IMPROVEMENT" IN RELATIONS AND THAT CISL WAS MOVING CLOSER TO,AND REESTABLISHING TIES WITH, THE AFL-CIO. THEY ALSO REPORTED THAT THE CISL LEADERS FOUND THEIR EXCHANGES OF VIEWS WITH USG OFFICIALS AND WITH UAW HIGHLY POSITIVE. MST PAPERS PBULISHED THE JOING COMMUNIQUE. THE CISL LEADERS EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR INCREASED INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AMONG WESTERN TRADE UNIONS IN THE FACE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND THE HOPE THAT THE AFL-CIO MIGHT REJOIN THE ICFTU, WHIH THEY SAID WAS "NO LONGER IMPOSSIBLE". THEY INDICATED THAT THE AFL-CIO AND CISL SHARED A CONCERN AT THE EXCESSIVE POWER OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND THEIR ALLEGEDLY DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYMENT BY USING INTERNATIONAL TRADE TO SHIFT PRODUCTION TO AREAS WHERE THEY COULD EXPLOIT LOW WAGES.

3. FACED WITH NASTY QUESTIONS STANDING HISTORY ON ITS HEAD BY MAKING THE AFL-CIO THE VILLAIN WHICH REPEATEDLY INTERFERED
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IN ITALY TO SPLIT THE UNION MOVEMENT, AND SUGGESTING THAT IT WAS IRONIC FOR CISL TO RETURN HAT-IN-HAND TO THE US JUST AS THE CGIL WAS BREAKING ITS ITES TO THE WFTU, THE CISL LEADERS DEFENDED THEMSELVES AND THE AFL-CIO EFFECTIVELY. "WHILE FOR THE UNIONS OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES ONE CAN OBSERVE THAT THEY ARE NOTHING MORE THAN A BRANCH OF THE STATE ADMINISTRATION," SAID CARNITI, " THE AMERICAN UNION MOVEMENT, SOME POSITIONS OF WHICH WE DO NOT SHARE IN ITS POLITICAL PROPOSALS AND CONCRETE INITIATIVES,IS A REA TRADE UNION (MOVEMENT), WITH WHICH ONE MUST COME TO ACCOUNT IF ONE WISHES TO CONFRONT, WITH EVZN A MINIMUM PROSPECT (OF SUCCESS),THE QUESTIONS OF THE MULTINATIONALS AND OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CRISIS". "WE SPEAK OPENLY ON ITALIAN QUESTIONS HERE, NOT IN WASHINTON", CARNITI ADDED: "THERE WERE NO DANGERS OF INTERFERENCE I.E. IN ITALIAN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS): THERE AMERICAN UNIONS WERE VERY CORRECT AND VERY REALISTIC". "WE SPECIFIED, "NOR DID WE SENSE QNY FLAVOR OF INTERFERENCE AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE WILL BE ANY IN THE FUTURE". MACARIO COMMENTED THAT WHILE THE FRENCH CGT, LIKE THE CGILBEFORE IT, FINDS ITSELF IN A PHASE OF LIQUIDATING THE PAST, CISL'S MISSION IN THE US SIGNIFIES A NEW PHASE OF FREER INTERNATIONAL ARTICULATION OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT. THIS IS ONE REASON, MORE HE SAID,

WY THE GROWING ISOLATION OF THE WFTU, ACCUSED ON INSENSIBILITY TO TRADE UNION AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EAST, IS ACCOMPANIED BY A GREATER AFL-CIO PARTICIPATION IN THE STRUGGLE OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT OF THE WEST. REFERRING TO CARNITI'S REMARKS, MACARIO REITERATED THAT NO ONE COULD ACCUSE AMERICAN LABOR OF ILLIBERALITY OR LACK OF COMBATIVITY AND AUTONOMY. GABAGLIO REPORTEDLY COMMENTED THAT "CONDITONS DO NOT YET EXIST TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS AS A UNITARY FEDERATION (IE. BETWEEN CCU AND THE AFL-CIO--EMBASSY NOTE), NEVERTHELESS, SOMETHING IS MATURING THERE TOO, ABOVE ALL, A NEWMOREOPEN ATTITUDE IS GROWING IN A NUMBER OF CATEGORY UNIONS AND IN A NEW GENERAGION OF TRADE UNIONISTS".

4. ON THE CONOMIC FRONT, CARNITI POINTED OUT THAT AFL-CIO
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AND CISL ESTIMATES OF THE CRISIS DIFFERED, THAT THE AFL-CIO VIEWED IT AS A TEMPORARY "LONG NIGHT" BETWEEN WO PERIOD OF EXPANSION, WHICH TRADITIONAL MARKET MECHANISM WOULD REPAIR, AND THUS TURNED TO STOP GAP TEMPORARY SOLUTIONS SUCH AS PROTECTIONISM. HE NOTED THAT "THE PROTECTIONIST TEMPTATION IS MUCH MORE PRESENT IN AMERICAN LABOR THAN IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES". THE OTHER LEADERS ALSO VIEWED USG ATTITUDES ON TRADE ASMUCH MORE POSITIVE AND PROGRESSIVE THAN THOSE OF THE AFL-CIO.

5. COMMENT. THIS PRESS CONFERENCE MAY HELP CLARIFY JUST WHAT THE CISL LEADERS EXPECTED AND EVIDENTLY GOT FROM THE TRIP. ALTHOUGH THE TRIP CAME DURING A PHASE O F INCREASING ASPERITY BETWEEN CISL AND CGIL WITHIN CCU, AND MAY EVENPALLY A ROLE IN THAT ASPERITY, THE CISL LEADERS FOUND IT NECESSARY TO RULE OUT ANY CONNECTION, LEST THEY PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS AND THEIR OTHER OPPONENETS ON THE LEFT. IN ITS NEW MORE ANTAGONISTIC STANCE VIS-A-VIS THE CGIL, CISL EVIDENTLY HAS NO INTENTION TO LEAVE, OR TO ATTEMPT TO BREAK UP THE CCU BUT RATHER TO CHANGE CISL'S TACTICS WITHIN CCU. AFL-CIO BLESSING THEY PRESEUMABLY NEITHER EXPECTED NOR EVEN WANTED, INDEED IT MAY WELL SERVE THEIR PRUPOSED MERELY SUBTLY TOWARM-UP THEIR RELATIOS WITH AN AFL-CIO WHICH MAINTAINS ITS HARD-NOSED OPPOSITION TO ITALIAN LABOT UNITY, IN ORDER TO INCREASE CISL'S LEVERAGE IN DEALING WITH CGIL WITHIN CCU AND IN OBSTARUCTING PCI USE OF CCU TO FURTHER THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE".

6. IN SHORT, CISL REGARDED THE TEIP AS A FENCE-MENDING OPERATION, AND IS PLEASEED WITH THE RESULTS. THE UIL, TOO, PARTICULARLY SECRETARY GENERSL BENVENUTO AND NATIONAL SECRETARY RAVECCA, ARE VERY ANXIOUS TO MDN FENCES WITH THE AFL-CIO. IN THE DAYS PRECEDING THE CISL VIST, THEY INDIRECTLY COVEYED THIER
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CONCERN THAT CISL WAS GETTING OUT IN FRONT AND MIGHT BECOME
THE AFL-CIO'S PREFERRED FRIEND. BENVENUTO WAS HOPING
TO SEE IRVING BROWN IN MILAN ON APRIL 20, BUT BROWN HAD
TO CANCEL HIS TRIP DUE TO ILLNESS.GARDNER

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